

POSTER BOY

A comedy in one act
by
Bradley Hayward

PREVIEW ONLY!

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SYNOPSIS

Stanley and Ruth have been attached at the hip ever since they were born. When Stanley enlists Ruth to help him hang a poster on his bedroom wall, he reveals a secret that puts their friendship to the test.

CHARACTERS

(1M + 1F)

RUTH.....Sweet & organized, female, 13.

STANLEY.....Charming & dramatic, male, 13.

SETTING

Stanley's bedroom.

RUNNING TIME

10 minutes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

POSTER BOY was selected as one of the winners of 17th Annual Lakeshore Players 10 Minute Play Festival. It was first presented by Lakeshore Players in White Bear Lake, Minnesota, and was directed by Daniel Reiva with the following cast:

STANLEY.....Albert E. Reinhardt

RUTH.....Sophia L. Islam

(AT RISE: There's a neatly made bed with a wall behind it. There are many posters taped to the wall, featuring video games, Broadway musicals, anime characters, and pop stars. STANLEY and RUTH sit side by side on the bed. Beside STANLEY is a large poster, rolled up with two elastic bands. STANLEY holds out his pinky finger.)

STANLEY

Pinky swear?

RUTH

Pinky swear.

(She holds out her pinky finger and wraps it around his. He takes a deep breath.)

STANLEY

Okay, here goes.

(He picks up the rolled poster.)

So, this poster came in the mail today and I need your honest opinion.

RUTH

I already pinky swore.

STANLEY

But I need you to mean it.

RUTH

I mean it.

STANLEY

I mean, REALLY mean it!

RUTH

I really mean it.

STANLEY

Really really?!

RUTH

(Nods)

Really really.

STANLEY

Okay.

(He takes another deep breath.)

RUTH

Why are you so nervous?

STANLEY

I'm not nervous.

(He gestures so dramatically that he accidentally smacks RUTH in the face with the poster.)

What makes you think I'm nervous?

RUTH

Ow!

STANLEY

(Squeals)

Are you okay?!

RUTH

I'm fine.

STANLEY

Sorry!

RUTH

Totally fine.

STANLEY

Really sorry!

RUTH

Don't worry about it.

STANLEY

Really, REALLY sorry!

RUTH

It's okay. Really.

STANLEY

Pinky swear?

RUTH

(Frustrated)

Stanley!

(STANLEY takes another deep breath.)

STANLEY

I guess I am a little nervous.

RUTH

No kidding.

(She puts her hand gently on his and speaks softly.)

Just relax.

STANLEY

You know it's tough for me to relax.

RUTH

I know.

STANLEY

Even during the best of times.

RUTH

I know.

STANLEY

But during the worst of times, it's even worse!

(He becomes increasingly agitated.)

It's like I have a million ping-pong balls flying around inside of me. A ping in my heart! A pong in my stomach! So much pinging, and even more ponging! Except that today isn't a "worst of time" at all! It's actually a "best of time." Possibly the best "best of time" I can imagine! At least I think it is. Which is why I asked you here. To tell me if this is a "best of time," or a "worst of time," or maybe just a "regular time." I don't know! That's why you're here. Okay, I'll stop talking now. I will. I just need your help! See what I mean? Ping, pong! Ping, pong! I can't help it! Help!

(RUTH grabs STANLEY's other hand and holds on as tight as possible, trying to channel all of her strength to him. She speaks calmly.)

RUTH

Deep breath, Stanley. Deep breath.

(STANLEY takes a deep breath. They take another deep breath together. He begins to calm down.)

There. That's better.

(They take one more deep breath together.)

STANLEY

Ruth...

RUTH

Yes, Stanley?

STANLEY

You always know what to do.

RUTH

(Blushes)

I do?

(STANLEY nods. RUTH giggles.)

I guess I do.

(Suddenly, STANLEY lets go of RUTH and picks up the poster.)

STANLEY

Now, back to the poster!

RUTH

(Ducks for cover)

You're not going to hit me again, are you?

STANLEY

I'm okay now.

RUTH

Are you sure?

STANLEY

(Raises his right hand)

Swear to god.

RUTH

What's so exciting about this poster?

STANLEY

Only everything! You see, this is more than just a poster. This is AN ANNOUNCEMENT!

RUTH

Remember when you asked me to tell you when you're being over-dramatic?

STANLEY

(Over-dramatic)

Yes.

RUTH

This is one of those times.

STANLEY

Note taken.

(He begins again, equally dramatic, but in a hushed voice.)

This is more than just a poster. This is an announcement.

RUTH

Much better.

(STANLEY takes one of the elastic bands off the rolled up poster.)

STANLEY

When I hang this poster on my wall... *if* I hang this poster on my wall... I will be revealing myself to everyone.

RUTH

It's not a poster of you naked, is it?

STANLEY

Not exactly.

RUTH

I hope not even remotely.

STANLEY

Here's where you come in.

(He stretches the elastic band between two fingers and flings it across the room.)

I need you to tell me if I should hang this poster on my wall, for all to see, or leave it rolled up under my bed.

RUTH

Why me?

STANLEY

Because you're always right.

RUTH

I'm not always right.

STANLEY

Yes you are. That's why you're secretary of the drama club.

RUTH

I'm only secretary because you're the president and I wanted to spend time together.

STANLEY

And here we are. Together.

(He takes the other elastic band off the rolled up poster.)

But there's a lot on the line here. When Mom and Dad see this poster hanging on my wall, they might take it the wrong way. Or exactly the right way, and not like it. So I need you to tell me what to do.

RUTH

What could possibly be on this poster that is making you so nervous?

STANLEY

What makes you think I'm still nervous?

(He stretches the elastic band between two fingers and tries to fling it across the room like the other one, but it accidentally snaps backwards and smacks RUTH in the face.)

RUTH

Ow!

STANLEY

Sorry!

(RUTH snatches the poster from STANLEY.)

RUTH

Give me that! Let me be the judge of this "announcement."

(STANLEY takes a deep breath. RUTH slowly unrolls the poster. As she takes in what she sees, she starts to look confused.)

I don't get it.

STANLEY

What's not to get?

RUTH

Why do you want to hang this up on your wall?

(STANLEY takes the poster and holds it up to take a look for himself.)

STANLEY

What do you mean, why? Isn't it obvious?

(He turns the poster around to show her again, revealing it to the audience at the same time. It's a poster of the Statue of David.)

He's super hot!

(RUTH's face completely falls, stunned by this revelation. Her entire world has shifted in seconds.)

RUTH

Oh.

STANLEY

You don't think he's hot?

RUTH

I guess?

(Crushed, she slowly sinks to the floor and leans against the bed.)

STANLEY

You guess?! Of course he's hot! Just look at him!

RUTH

I saw.

STANLEY

I thought you'd love it!

RUTH

I don't love it.

(Disappointed, STANLEY rolls up the poster.)

STANLEY

Oh. I guess I won't hang it, then. I just thought it would be a good way to come out to Mom and Dad.

RUTH

(Quietly)

And me.

STANLEY

What?

RUTH

(Stifles a tear)

And me.

(STANLEY laughs, totally convinced that she's joking.)

STANLEY

You knew.

(RUTH shakes her head.)

You had to know.

(RUTH shakes her head.)

You didn't know?!

RUTH

I thought I was your girlfriend.

STANLEY

Oh.

(Suddenly, his world shifts in seconds. He sinks to the floor next to her. Totally shaken, he grabs his stomach and groans.)

RUTH

What's wrong?

STANLEY

Nothing.

RUTH

Looks like you're about puke.

STANLEY

I'm not.

RUTH

Then what's wrong?

STANLEY

It's just... This is one of those pangs in my stomach I was telling you about. I feel horrible. I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. I had no idea you felt that way about me.

RUTH

I thought...

(She turns away, a little sad and a lot embarrassed.)

Nevermind.

STANLEY

You thought what?

RUTH

It's just... I thought you felt that way about me, too.

STANLEY

I do.

RUTH

No, you don't.

STANLEY

No. I don't. At least not the same way. But I do care for you.

RUTH

Stop.

STANLEY

You're my best friend.

RUTH

It's fine.

STANLEY

It's not fine.

RUTH

Pinky swear.

(STANLEY takes a deep breath.)

STANLEY

You know what I hate?

RUTH

What?

STANLEY

I hate how you always know what to do and I never know what to do. Which is why I needed you today. I needed you to tell me that hanging this poster was either a really good idea or a really bad idea. And now I know. It's a terrible idea! This stupid poster hurt your feelings. And if it hurt your feelings, it might hurt Mom's feelings. Or Dad's feelings. So if it saves me from hurting anyone, I can wait to tell people about who I really am. What's the rush, right? So,

thank you. Thank you for knowing exactly what to do, as usual, and saving me from making the biggest mistake of my life.

(RUTH takes a deep breath. Then without warning, she snaps into action and jumps to her feet.)

RUTH

Give me the poster.

STANLEY

What?

RUTH

I said, give me the poster!

END OF PREVIEW

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